

# REDUCING THE RISK OF RADON

The EPA estimates that radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, resulting in approximately 14,000 deaths per year. Radon emitted from certain geologic formations enters homes primarily through cracks in the foundation; if not properly vented, it can accumulate to dangerous levels. Fortunately, radon is relatively easy and inexpensive to remove.

The EPA's Radon program emphasizes education and public outreach to inform homeowners about the dangers of radon, how to test for it and how to get rid of it. The program has had some notable successes. It is estimated that 900 lung cancer deaths have been averted in the areas comprising New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as a result of over 20,000 residential radon mitigations. In addition, as a result of the statewide building code, 23,500 new homes in the highest risk areas in New Jersey have been built with radon-resistant construction.

New Mexico offers a closeup of one successful ongoing effort. EPA and state officials are working closely with the All Indian Pueblo Council (AIPC), which is a consortium of 19 Federally-recognized Indian Tribes who live in areas with potentially high levels of radon. EPA's regional office in Dallas, TX has worked cooperatively with the AIPC, sharing information and inviting them to participate in educational programs such as those that take place at the All States Annual Radon Conference. Cooperation efforts continue to reduce the risk of radon.

Efforts are now underway to include radon testing and mitigation activities as part of the ongoing State Weatherization program. Through these and other programs, the state and EPA are committed to helping the tribes in New Mexico identify and address the health risks posed by unhealthy levels of radon.

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